AI-Powered Conversation Tools - Chatbots: Opportunities and Challenges That Present to Academics within Higher Education

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Abstract : With the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in 2020, many higher education institutions and education systems are turning to hybrid or fully distance online courses to maintain social distance and provide a safe virtual space for learning and teaching. However, the majority of faculty members were not well prepared for the shift to blended or distance learning. Communication frustrations are prevalent in both hybrid and full-distance courses. A systematic literature review was conducted by a comprehensive analysis of 1688 publications that focused on the application of the adoption of chatbots in education. This study aimed to explore instructors' experiences with chatbots in online and blended undergraduate English courses. Language learners are overwhelmed by the variety of information offered by many online sites. The recently emerged chatbots (e.g.: ChatGPT) are slightly superior in performance as compared to those traditional through previous technologies such as tapes, video recorders, and websites. The field of chatbots has been intensively researched, and new methods have been developed to demonstrate how students can best learn and practice a new language in the target language. However, it is believed that among the many areas where chatbots are applied, while chatbots have been used as effective tools for communicating with business customers, in consulting and targeting areas, and in the medical field, chatbots have not yet been fully explored and implemented in the field of language education. This issue is challenging enough for language teachers; they need to study and conduct research carefully to clarify it. Pedagogical chatbots may alleviate the perception of a lack of communication and feedback from instructors by interacting naturally with students through scaffolding the understanding of those learners, much like educators do. However, educators and instructors lack the proficiency to effectively operate this emerging AI chatbot technology and require comprehensive study or structured training to attain competence. There is a gap between language teachers' perceptions and recent advances in the application of AI chatbots to language learning. The results of the study found that although the teachers felt that the chatbots did the best job of giving feedback, the teachers needed additional training to be able to give better instructions and to help them assist in teaching. Teachers generally perceive the utilization of chatbots to offer substantial assistance to English language instruction.

Keywords : artificial intelligence in education, chatbots, education and technology, education system, pedagogical chatbot, chatbots and language education

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